4 Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Hard MA11

In some villages there was a primary school, for example in Bekhir, Sarkan and Sargalu, but not by any means in all. In Taqawra and Rakawa there were no schools. Sometimes there could be a Coran school in connection with a mosque or, for example, at Sargalu, which children attended until their proper schooling began. As regards school conditions, reference should be made to Longrigg and Stocking[1]. I shall here deal with the reflection of the school in the homes where I stayed, the effect of some members of the family having learned, or being about to learn, to read and write.

As pointed out by Longrigg and Stocking, the acquisition of book learning is marked by the fact that the passage of both primary and secondary schools becomes "the watershed"[2] in a community like the Kurdish. How decisive a watershed, can be seen if we observe the difference between working conditions in the schools arranged on the Western pattern, and in the Kurdish homes.

The school and exercise books brought home by the Taqawra sheikh's 12 year old son during the holidays appeared to be completely unadaptable foreign elements in the atmosphere of the home. In the first place there was no possibility of placing or keeping the books anywhere except in the wall niches, equivalents for many household articles and quite unsuited to books. Nor was there any work table in this dwelling pattern, where all work was done on the floor. In addition it was impossible to read and study in quiet surroundings, for the house offered neither space nor possibility for private life.

In my interpreter's home at Sulaimani, I found examples of the various training possibilities open to young women in Southern Kurdistan in 1957. My interpreter had been trained as a folk-school teacher at the Teachers' Training College at Baghdad[3]. During her studies she had lived there as a boarder. The training here lasted two years if the girl was to teach at one of the five 4 years primary schools which were beginning to be opened in villages, and three years if she were to teach in a corresponding school in the towns. My interpreter had taken the 3 year course, and was at the time I lived in her home, a teacher at the Girsha School for Girls opened in Sulaimani in 1956. At her home I was able to see how incompatible to the family's daily pattern of behaviour was the school work of her 14 year old sister, who after the summer holidays would have to pass an exam in mathematics to complete her 3 years intermediate school. Her school and exercise books, her protractor and ruler, lay in the wall niches all mixed up with cups, glasses, medicines; she herself sat on the floor in a corner and tried in vain to concentrate on the circles and triangles she was describing or the calculations she was engaged in. Finally she left the home. With books and drawing instruments under her black abā she wandered off to stay with her newly-married sister whose husband had left shortly after marriage to work in one of the villages. The whole life pattern, with two uneducated women in the home, where all contact between women took place in the home, conditions for working school children were decidedly poor. Where, as in Sulaimani's urban suburbs, girls at school are absent from the home for many hours a day, their home training as wives and mothers is interrupted. If the half-grown up daughters were engaged in schooling and the adult ones were mothers, as was the case at my interpreter's home in Sulaimani, all cooking, washing and washing-up for a family of 14 persons devolved, except for the holidays, on the two uneducated wives at home. In addition there was the churning of ghee and the baking of bread which in our culture is delegated to factories.

If, therefore, the working effort of the daughters is removed from the home, an immense labour is